

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **2Timothy 4:15-18**.
- B. Times of depression, disappointment, and despair are part of everyone's life.
- C. We build character and test ourselves when we deal with life's tragic blows. We, like Paul, need to realize that as long as we are faithful to X, He will stand with us.
- D. Paul had hardships while preaching and serving as an apostle. But he had a great faith and knew that in times of great adversity--the Lord stood with him.

I. **ORGANIZED RELIGION CAN FAIL US.**

- A. What do you do when your church leaves you?
(Story of Mattoon church that broke away from their denominational hierarchy. People were confused in that how their 'trusted' leaders could attempt to lead them in such a direction).
Go to the Bible, search for the truth, for it has nothing to fear. Truth saves (Jn. 8:31).
Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;
- B. Those who had worshipped the Baals and Asherah had to realize their religion was in error (it had failed them) when Elijah on Mt. Carmel triumphed (1Kgs. 18).
- C. In Ephesus, many burned their magick books and left the temple of Artemis (see Ac. 19:18-20). The occult had failed the people of Ephesus. Demetrius said, (Ac. 19:26-27).
"And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all. **27** And not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship should even be dethroned from her magnificence."
- D. The sectarian views of the Pharisees and Sadducees had failed in bringing the people closer to God through the Law of Moses (Mt. 23:15).
"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.
- E. The restoration leaders, the Campbells, Stone, Creath, Smith, etc., realized that the churches they grew up in were not teaching the Bible, but their own traditions. Jesus spoke about voiding the word of God for the sake of tradition (Mt. 15:3, 8-9).
And He answered and said to them, "And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? **8** 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. **9** 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'"
- F. Jesus' church will never fail, because He is the builder and foundation, and it is based on truth (1Tim. 3:15; see Mt. 16:18; 1Cor. 3:11).
but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.
- G. If your organized religion fails you, be faithful to Jesus, the Lord will stand with you!

II. **PEOPLE CAN FAIL US.**

- A. Jesus faced disappointment in His ministry. The very teachings that would bring people closer to God were the very teachings turned many away from following Him (Jn. 6:66-69). See Mk. 10:17-22.
As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore. **67** Jesus said therefore to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" **68** Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. **69** "And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."
- B. The apostles failed X during the time of His trial and crucifixion.
- C. People who are friends of ours may make promises and not keep them (Mt. 5:36-37).

“Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. **37** “But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; and anything beyond these is of evil.

- D. In our scripture reading, Paul’s fellow brethren deserted him (see 2Tim. 4:15-18).
- E. Sometimes people are even wolves in sheep’s clothing (Ac. 20:29-30). We can put great trust in someone, only to be disappointed. People have followed cultic leaders, who have failed their followers.
“I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; **30** and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.”
- F. In the workplace, your boss or supervisor may treat you unfairly. Those who have promised your things may not follow through on what they have said.
- G. Only JC will be perfectly true to us. Even when others disappoint, be faithful to Him and the Lord will stand with you!

III. **OUR FAMILY CAN FAIL US.**

- A. Joseph suffered an awful fate from his older brothers. He did nothing to cause them to act the way they did. Their jealousy of him was not his fault.
- B. Job’s wife told a very troubled and sick man to “curse God and die.” She was not the supporting spouse that she should have been through all of the tragedy he suffered (Job 2:9).
- C. Jesus himself gave a very hard teaching that said sometimes a man’s enemies will be those of his own household (Mt. 10:34-39). There is no argument any “hotter” than a religious one that can divide a family against itself.
“Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. [35] For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; **36** and A MAN’S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD. **37** He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. **38** And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. **39** He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it.”
- D. But there is great comfort in knowing that if even our family lets us down, the Lord will stand by His faithful servants (Mt. 10:40).
“He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.”

IV. **OUR HEALTH CAN FAIL US.**

- A. Lazarus was a man who, because of his very difficult life, had his health fail him (Lk. 16:20-21).
“And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, [21] and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.”
- B. No matter what we do in the ways of staying healthy we cannot live forever. Toward the end of our days, our health can fail. It is not a sin, but very, very frustrating.
- C. Never blame the Lord for our physical problems. The lack of physical strength and presence of pain are not His fault. (Example of Byron & Ruth Wright).
- D. But if we remain faithful, God will bless, the Lord will stand with us.

V. **SOMETIMES WE FAIL OURSELVES.**

- A. We, when we fail, can find ourselves very hard to live with. We must learn to like ourselves and learn to forgive ourselves when God does.
- B. The prodigal son was an individual who “came to his senses” and realized that he had cheated himself (Lk. 15:17).
“But when he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!’”
- C. Lazarus would have been considered a loser and a failure by today’s standards.
- D. Those who were very religious (the Pharisees) thought the publican was a worthless human being. Yet, because of his humbleness, God answered the tax-collector’s prayer (Lk. 18:9-14).

- E. Do not get too down on yourself. Jesus is faithful, even when we fail (2Tim. 2:12).
If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us;

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. The three Ds need not bother you for very long:

1. Depression.
2. Disappointment.
3. Despair.

...if you are living faithfully for Jesus.

- B. It makes no difference if you:

1. Have friends fail you.
2. Have your church fails you.
3. Have your health fails you.
4. Have your family fails you.
5. Have failed yourself.

...be thou faithful unto death, and the Lord will stand with you.

- C. Jesus said, "Come unto me..."
D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.